



About The Living Planet Aquarium

Description

The Loveland Living Planet Aquarium is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We provide countless educational opportunities to understand and respect our precious Earth and its living ecosystems, from the Utah deserts and mountains, to rain forest habitats, to the planet's vast oceans.

The Loveland Living Planet Aquarium has become one of Utah's most unique and popular attractions, and is definitely a must-see if you are planning a trip to Utah. Exhibits feature sharks, rays, seahorses, Sea jellies, octopus, piranha, a rescued Green sea turtle, Gentoo penguins and more! It's a unique opportunity for the many landlocked Utahans, particularly children, who have not previously had the chance to interact with such creatures.

Mission

To inspire people to explore, discover, and learn about Earth's diverse ecosystems.

The Passion Behind The Project

When Brent Andersen was five years old, growing up in Sandy, Utah, his grandmother gave him a Time Life hardcover book about the sea. This single gift determined the direction for the rest of his life. The hours he spent reading this book turned into years of fascination with the underwater world. As a child, he also loved the television series 'The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau', and his fascination with the sea became a solid intention to become a marine biologist.

He earned a degree in Marine Biology from the University of California, Santa Barbara, but discovered marine biology jobs were few and far between. He took a job in Santa Barbara with a cancer research company. With great pay and generous vacation, he was the envy of many of his classmates. Although he had a promising career working as a biochemist, he could not forget his childhood passion for the sea, and it didn't help matters with the ocean view just a few hundred yards away from his office window.



An audio tape Brent listened to one day asked questions that forever changed his destiny: “What would you attempt to do if you knew you couldn’t fail? What would you create? Who could you inspire? What wondrous things would you learn?” Being so near the majestic ocean, yet so far from his childhood dream, he began to envision the benefits of bringing an exciting underwater adventure to his home town of Salt Lake City. He wanted to share his passion for the sea with the many landlocked Utahns who may never have the opportunity to learn about the wonders of the water and learn about how to better care for their planet Earth. He decided his dream was important enough to simply leave everything behind and start anew. He moved back to Salt Lake City in February 1998, formed a non-profit organization and began the task of creating The Living Planet Aquarium.

Timeline

The Vision: In 1998, Brent V. Andersen, marine biologist, began developing a vision for a world-class aquarium in Salt Lake City.

Outreach: In 1999, the “Aqua Van” was outfitted with educational exhibits and began visiting Utah schools.

Preview Exhibit: In June of 2004, a preview exhibit of The Living Planet Aquarium opened at the Gateway Mall. This 10,000 square foot public exhibit displayed local freshwater animals and marine life from around the world, and offered an exclusive experience never before available in Utah. Attendance far exceeded projections with over 150,000 visitors per year.

Expansion: In June of 2006, the preview exhibit relocated to a much larger (43,000 square foot) building in Sandy, Utah. The Living Planet Aquarium featured over 1,700 animals and 340 freshwater, saltwater, and rainforest species. In 2012, the Aquarium hit an annual attendance record of 457,619 visits.

World-Class Aquarium opens: On March 25, 2014, the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium opened. “Loveland” was added to the name of the Aquarium to honor a generous donation from the Loveland Family Foundation of Utah.



The Aquarium features 2,500 animals of 450 species. There are four galleries: Ocean Explorer, Journey to South America, Discover Utah, and Antarctic Adventure. The 136,000 square foot space includes a 300,000 gallon shark tank with a walk-through tunnel, a four-story high rainforest gallery, and a banquet room with a floor-to-ceiling window into the shark tank.

Education Programs: The Living Planet offers many education programs within the community. The two educational outreach programs, The Utah Waters Van, and The Rainforest Van, which visit Utah elementary school students, have continued to expand each year. From March 2014 to March 2015, over 40,000 students explored the Aquarium on field trips, and our Education Outreach team visited nearly 60,000 students in schools across the state. The Education Outreach team visits every 4th grader every year statewide.

Employees: Currently, there are over 150 employees at the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium. The employees endorse and embrace the mission, vision and future direction of this important educational organization. Loveland Living Planet Aquarium management and staff are proud of the respect earned within the educational, environmental, conservation and museum communities for principles, practices and leadership devoted to creating a healthier and more caring "living planet."

Record-Breaking Attendance: On February 16, 2015, the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium welcomed its one millionth visitor since opening day. By March 25, 2015, the new Aquarium had seen 1.1 million guests.

Growth: The Living Planet is continuing to add new exhibits and features regularly. In addition to updates and expansions of current galleries, the Aquarium also features a Changing Exhibits Hall.

Community Support: The Loveland Living Planet Aquarium is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that relies on generous public and private donations in order to grow and expand. Without the support of sponsors, The Living Planet would not be what it is today.